



LARAC

BUSINESS PLAN

2019 - 2023





Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee

Founded and run by serving local authority recycling and waste management officers

LARAC National Representatives



Andrew Bird
Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council



Mark Foxall
Shropshire Council



Mandy Pile
Dover District Council



Durk Reyner
Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
Vice-Chair



Maria Warner
Oxford City Council



Ashley Wild
Hart District Council

LARAC Regions Representatives



Eastern
Hilary Garlick
Suffolk County Council



East Midlands
Eloise Attwood
South Northamptonshire Council



London
Dimitra Rappou
North London Waste Authority



Northern Ireland
Declan Donnelly
Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council



North East
Victoria Burrell
Durham County Council



North West
Carole Taylor
Pendle Borough Council
Chair



Scotland
Stephen Gilfillan
West Lothian Council



South East
Amy Bridgford
Aylesbury Vale District Council



South West
Dawn Fearn
Gloucester City Council



Wales
Paul Quayle
Monmouthshire County Council



West Midlands
Dan Roberts
South Staffordshire Council
Vice-Chair



Yorkshire & Humber
John Coates
North Lincolnshire Council
Treasurer

LARAC Co-optees



Paldeep Bhatti
Kent Resource Partnership



Carole Destre
Royal Borough of Greenwich



Ed Yendluri
Westminster City Council

The LARAC Executive is supported by:



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Policy Support p/t

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Executive Summary

This is the 2019 to 2023 business plan for LARAC and has been produced to guide the work of the LARAC Executive and support staff towards a stated vision and mission.

This period will see a great deal of change in waste policy in the UK with a new DEFRA Resources and Waste Strategy and the devolved governments moving even further forward with their resource ambitions. Layered over this is the UK withdrawal from the European Union, where most of the waste policy relevant to local authorities has emanated from in the past 20 years.

Local authority budgets have been through a sustained period of reduction and this has impacted on membership numbers for LARAC, with a slow decrease in members over

the previous four years. Externally LARAC is well regarded within the industry and by governments.

This business plan contains slightly revised vision and mission statements and aims to take forward progress on two priority areas and one support area. The priority areas cover membership services and policy work. To help progress these priority areas there may need to be changes to the resources that LARAC utilises.

Both membership services and the policy work area have four key outcomes each. Actions will be taken forward across the next four years to deliver these key outcomes and take the organisation forward, with the hope of being able to say at the end of the four year plan that the vision has been achieved.



About LARAC

LARAC (Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee) was formed in 1985 to represent the then emerging voice of local government recycling officers. Since that time it has continued to represent local authority views on waste, recycling and resource issues.

LARAC is a membership organisation and membership is drawn from local authorities across all four parts of the UK. Membership currently stands just below 300 members and whilst the local authority holds the actual membership of LARAC, the organisation represents the viewpoint of professional officers and so operates as an apolitical organisation. Through its existence LARAC has sought to be the premier and recognised voice for local authority recycling officers.

The organisation is run by an Executive of up to 24 people who are all local authority waste and recycling officers, giving their time to LARAC on a voluntary basis. Members of the Executive can represent a region or serve as national representatives; additionally there are opportunities for co-optees. The Chair of LARAC is elected from the Executive and can serve a maximum of four years in the role. The Chair is supported by two Vice Chairs and a Treasurer/Secretary and also leads a policy team drawn from other members of the Executive. The Executive meets four times a year and the policy team holds additional meetings when necessary.

LARAC has two full time employees who manage the day to day running of the organisation and support the Executive. This is supplemented by seconded and short-term resources as needed for specific work areas such as policy development or conference organisation.

Full membership of LARAC is open to all local authorities in the UK with associate membership available to other related organisations. Despite starting as an organisation formed by recycling officers, local authority officers who are involved with LARAC cover a range of posts within their own authorities. They are all responsible for advising their authorities and delivering day to day municipal waste and recycling services to households and businesses.

LARAC still maintains its founding principal of representing local authorities on waste and resource management issues. It responds to government consultations and works with the wider industry to take the resource agenda forward and present the views and interests of its members.

Additionally, LARAC provides a number of services for the members, including regular E newsletters, a quarterly magazine and information and bulletin services through the LARAC website.



About the Business Plan

This latest LARAC Business Plan builds on previous plans and follows a thorough review since the previous plan was produced in 2015. During the intervening four years, external policy changes at national government level have been, to a degree, limited. However, there has been a surge in public and media interest in the sector of late, bringing heightened scrutiny but also an opportunity to raise the profile of LARAC to better serve its members and help shape the resource agenda.

The plan is designed to guide the work of LARAC and move it towards achieving the vision statement. Since 2015, LARAC membership numbers have reduced by 27 and this is a trend that has been occurring for a number of years. Elements of this in the past have been due to merging of authorities or partnership working, but more recently it has also reflected ongoing austerity measures that local authorities have been facing. Even a modest membership fee such as LARAC's now comes under scrutiny and some authorities have imposed blanket bans on such payments.

Whilst seen and regarded primarily as a "waste" organisation LARAC is first and foremost a membership organisation; without any members it does not exist. LARAC must therefore demonstrate the value of membership in order to maintain support and provide a mandate to speak on behalf of local authorities. Certain aspects of LARAC membership are already well valued by members, such as reduced rates to the conferences, vacancy advertising and the information newsletters. However other aspects, such as the extensive policy work that LARAC undertakes, is less well valued as it is less tangible and often unseen.

One of the aims of this next business plan period is to assign a value to this policy work,

in order to demonstrate to existing and prospective members the benefit of remaining engaged with LARAC. This represents a potential opportunity given the limitations that many local authorities now place on roles and tasks concerning wider policy engagement, including consultation responses.

Whilst the previous plan had five priority areas this plan has just two: membership services and policy work. The previous plan has undoubtedly moved the organisation forward, however there is a realisation that it was too ambitious and tried to cover too many areas given the resources available to LARAC.

To progress work in these two priority areas LARAC will have to work in new ways and may need to allocate resources in a different manner. For a small organisation the utilisation of resources is critical to ensuring progress and achieving success. Work in this support area will enable actions in the two priority areas to be undertaken and completed. It is not considered a priority area in its own right as progress with resources in itself will not deliver the sorts of change and progress that will help achieve the vision.

LARAC is well respected by industry and by the members it works hard to represent. This means there is a sound base on which to continue to move the organisation forward. However, the lifespan of this plan is likely to see some of the biggest changes in waste policy across the UK in the past 20 years that could have any number of impacts on local authorities and how they provide their services. As a lean organisation relying largely on volunteers, LARAC has to ensure it evolves sufficiently in order to place itself in the best position to support its members.



Vision Statement

To be the leading voice for local authorities on resource management, recycling and waste.

Mission Statement

To influence UK waste policy for the benefit of our members in a manner which advances the waste and resource industry. To provide membership services in a cost effective and quality manner so that our members are well informed. To provide premier local authority national waste conferences that act as a catalyst for information dissemination and promotion of good practice within local authorities.



Business Plan Structure

LARAC VISION

To be the leading voice for local authorities on resource management, recycling and waste



LARAC MISSION

To influence UK waste policy for the benefit of our members in a manner which advances the waste and resource industry. To provide membership services in a cost effective and quality manner so that our members are well informed. To provide premier local authority national waste conferences that act as a catalyst for information dissemination and promotion of good practice within local authorities



MEMBERSHIP SERVICES

- Increase membership numbers
- Improve satisfaction in services
- Improve value of services to members
- Increase the breadth of services to members

POLICY WORK

- Expand and enhance policy capacity and capability
- Regular contact with relevant government departments
- Comprehensive consultation responses
- High levels of member engagement in policy work



RESOURCES

Have suitable levels of resource in place to deliver key outcomes and vision



Membership Services

Whilst LARAC is focused on waste management in the UK, it is a membership organisation and as such must give its members a reason to join LARAC, to give them a sense of “value” for their membership fee.

The types of membership services and how they are delivered has evolved over the course of the previous business plan, but this has not been a radical shift. At the same time there has been a slow decline in the number of members. Where this has not been due to partnership working or blanket subscription bans it could indicate that the LARAC membership is not valued enough for members to be retained.

Key Outcomes

1. Increase membership numbers
2. Improve satisfaction in services
3. Improve value of services to members
4. Increase the breadth of services to members

This business plan must look to demonstrate the value to a local authority of being a member of LARAC. This may come through the policy work that the organisation undertakes but will mainly come via the services and opportunities that LARAC can offer to its members in return for a membership fee.

The ability to offer a greater range of services will mean a rethink of the current resources that LARAC employs and has available to it. These may well need to evolve for LARAC to achieve enhanced membership services and will be looked at as part of the business plan over the next four years.

Actions

- Improve website to increase member use
- Increase information held on website
- Explore “consultancy” type opportunities
- Provide online training/webinars
- Complete peer review of LARAC
- Explore delivery of peer review programme for local authority waste services
- Explore opportunities with WRAP concerning LA portal
- Review and enhance communications with members
- Develop a framework for regional events





Policy Work

A key aspect of LARAC's work is to represent members and their interests to policy makers across the UK, as well as the wider industry. This is done through, for example, responding to formal government consultations, sitting on industry working groups and producing policy positions. LARAC's deep involvement in these groups and processes means that we have moved to a point where we are having influence on policy making.

There has been a decline in the capacity of individual local authorities to engage with policy makers. Yet, the new DEFRA Resources and Waste Strategy and the associated raft of new policy and legislation provides a critical opportunity for the local authority voice to be heard. It is therefore becoming increasingly important for LARAC to respond thoroughly and intelligently to consultations and calls for evidence to ensure that the local authority view point is understood and considered.

Key Outcomes

1. Expand and enhance policy capacity and capability
2. Maintain and enhance regular contact with relevant government departments
3. Engage in comprehensive consultation responses
4. Ensure high levels of member engagement in policy work

LARAC works hard to ensure that it can influence sufficiently policy-making at all stages through continual engagement on key industry topics. Its views and input are sought as a matter of course for industry working groups but capacity issues mean these requests cannot be consistently serviced. Sometimes this means prioritising the key meetings but maybe missing others. The policy capability within the organisation needs to be enhanced in order for LARAC to represent its members across all levels required.

Despite advances in the use of member surveys, it has often proved challenging to obtain and distill in a timely manner member views in order to inform detailed policy responses. New ways of engaging with members are needed to ensure that LARAC remains representative of members' views.

Actions

- Explore partnership opportunities
- Complete a review of LARAC policy procedures, including the potential to delegate powers
- Identify designated leads for key policy areas
- Review the function of the policy team
- Review the consultation response process
- Identify policy areas for think tank/briefing papers
- Develop a process for delivering timely policy briefings on ad hoc events
- Review policy resources and work areas within LARAC
- Develop a framework for regional events
- Review policy resources and work areas within LARAC
- Develop a consultation template process for members



Support Area - Resources

To deliver the vision for LARAC the organisation needs to evolve, which means the skills and resources it has in place today may not be the skills and resources that it needs in the future. This matter was considered as part of the process of formulating the business plan. It was apparent that the resources LARAC currently has and the way in which they are utilised may not be aligned to the two priority areas, the actions within them and the future needs of the organisation. Development of the resources available to LARAC will ultimately support both priority themes.

In this context, resources also includes the skills available to and within LARAC and an

assessment of the skills that will be needed in the future. There is also a need to ensure that financial and operational resources are also fit for purpose going forward.

Areas where LARAC are likely to need specific skillsets in the future include:

- Research
- Finance
- Media creativity
- Technology
- Commercial mindedness
- Partnership working
- Policy Development
- Training/Facilitation

Key Outcomes

1. Develop levels of resource sufficient to deliver policy and membership services key outcomes and the vision

Actions

- Complete skills audit of Executive members and Support Services staff
- Analyse future resource needs
- Review of non-human resources currently used
- Review of financial arrangements and performance
- Complete gap analysis of current and future resource and skills needs, identify future requirements and develop plan for efficient transition
- Revise contracts, secondment arrangements and Executive positions



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